

SOUTH CAROLINA



Getting children ready for school.

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SOUTH CAROLINA'S CHILDREN

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# FIRST STEPS QUICK FACTS 2006

In March 2006, First Steps was officially reauthorized until:

2013

Books Distributed to Children:

256,056

Children Served:

68,382

Families and Adults Served:

18,764

First Steps' Early Education Slots:

1,470

Child Care Facilities Served by First Steps Partnerships:

719

First Steps' County Partnerships:

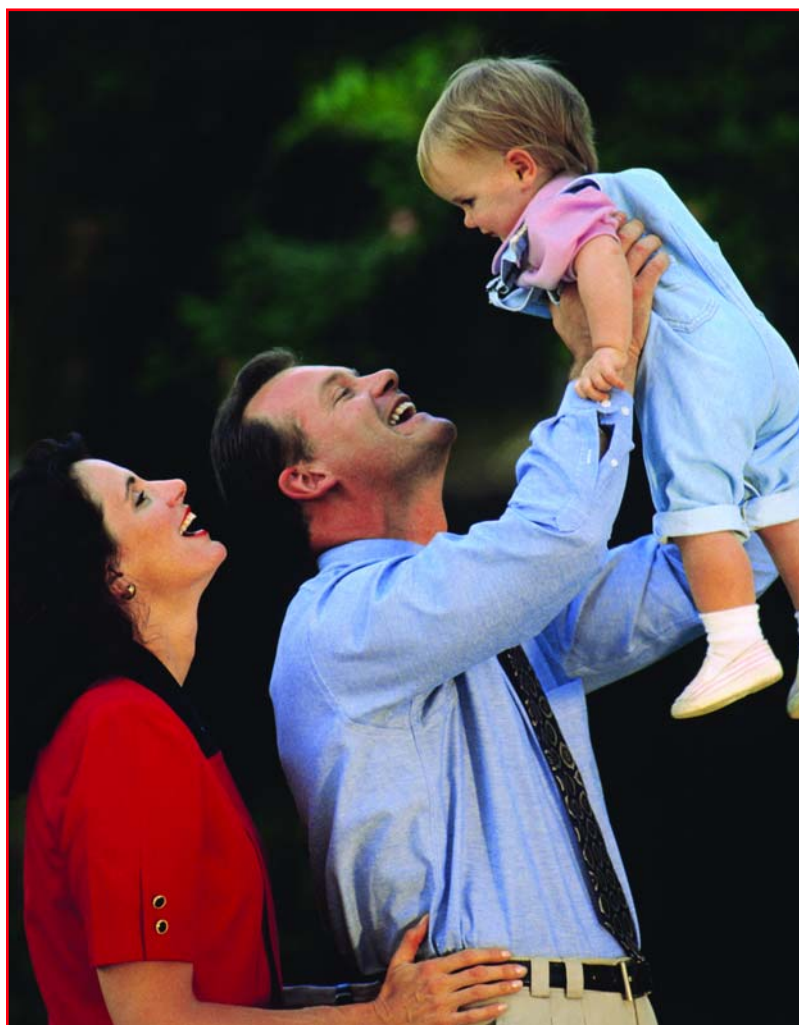
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## SOUTH CAROLINA'S FIRST STEPS: WORKING TOGETHER...

A child's successful developmental progress from birth to school entry requires good health, nurture and quality care. And all along the way – from child care support to parent education programs, from the physician's office to 4-year-old kindergarten – South Carolina First Steps is there, working together with our community partners to focus on what matters most:

...TO IMPROVE THE  
SCHOOL READINESS OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA'S CHILDREN



## LEGISLATION

“There is established South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through county partnerships, public and private funds and support for high-quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to learn.”

– SECTION 59-152-10 (June 1999)

### FAST FACT:

Recent population data for South Carolina estimates 334,241 children ages 0-5. (U.S. Census, SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research & Statistics, 2004)



## PURPOSE

“South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness exists to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of South Carolina’s young children and their families.”

– SECTION 59-152-20

## GOALS

“The goals for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness are to:

- (1) **provide parents with access** to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) **increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) **promote high quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) **provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to learn; and
- (5) **mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to learn.”

– SECTION 59-152-30





# FISCAL YEAR 2006 BOARD OF TRUSTEES\*

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\* Currently, there are two Early Childhood Educator Vacancies on the Board.

December 31, 2006

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, this year Judge Thomas Cooper handed down his ruling in the state's long-standing school funding equity case that South Carolina needs to deliver better, higher quality early education opportunities for disadvantaged children.

In each of South Carolina's 46 counties, First Steps has worked to answer the call by helping parents provide stimulating early experiences that will increase school readiness and long-term academic success of their children. And First Steps has done so through an approach that we believe has merit applied across the educational spectrum – by creating choices for parents and attaching funding to the child. In the pages of this annual report, you'll learn about First Steps' commitment to children and families statewide and its accountability to taxpayers across South Carolina.



Reauthorized last spring until 2013, First Steps will continue striving towards better early opportunities for South Carolina's children. Through innovative solutions like working to raise the quality of the child care system in our state and creating public private partnerships allowing parents to choose the best early education for their 4-year-olds, First Steps is helping create a brighter future for all our young children for years to come.

We all need to continue working to ensure our children reach their fullest potential. I'd like to thank you for your time and efforts in helping the children of South Carolina. Take care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford  
Governor  
State of South Carolina

**“Early childhood intervention at the pre-kindergarten level and continuing through at least grade three is necessary to minimize, to the extent possible, the impact and the effect of poverty on the educational abilities and achievements of those children. Such early intervention not only makes educational and humanitarian sense, it also makes economic sense. The testimony in this record of experts, educators and legislators alike is that the dollars spent in early childhood intervention are the most effective expenditures in the educational process.”**

*Judge Thomas W. Cooper, Jr.  
Abbeville County School District et al. v.  
The State of South Carolina et al.*

## FIRST STEPS REAUTHORIZATION

The First Steps legislation, first approved in 1999, would have expired July 1, 2007 unless reauthorized by the South Carolina legislature.

Legislation to reauthorize First Steps was cosponsored by a bipartisan contingent of 25 senators and 79 representatives, and approved unanimously by the General Assembly in February 2006. With the Governor's signature, First Steps to School Readiness was reauthorized until 2013.



*Former Governor Jim Hodges, First Steps Executive Director, Susan DeVenny, and children and teachers from Arthurtown Child Development Center in Columbia look on as Governor Mark Sanford signs the First Steps reauthorization legislation.*

### FAST FACT:

In 2006,  
Governor Sanford  
and the SC General Assembly  
reauthorized First Steps  
until 2013.

**“Thanks to our elected leaders, First Steps can continue to play a strong role in ensuring quality, accountability, collaboration and leadership for children among all partners serving South Carolina’s youngest learners.”**

*Susan DeVenny, SC First Steps executive director,  
on First Steps’ reauthorization*



## FIRST STEPS EVALUATION

Every three years, First Steps is required by legislation to contract with an outside evaluator to “assess progress toward achieving the First Steps goals and to determine the impact of the initiative on children and families at the state and local levels.” The High/Scope Education Research Foundation conducted the 2006 evaluation of First Steps’ outcomes and practices. The evaluation detailed First Steps’ many successes as well as areas where improvements can better serve South Carolina’s children. The overarching finding of the 2006 High/Scope evaluation is that First Steps is “meeting its legislative mandate to reach the neediest South Carolinians.”



A special thanks to the three-person evaluation team, Dr. Susan Shi, Patty Kay and Dr. Dexter Cook, for their dedication working with the First Steps Board of Trustees and S.C. First Steps to oversee the evaluation.

## FIRST STEPS' STRATEGIES

By unanimously reauthorizing S.C. First Steps until 2013, the Governor and the General Assembly sent a strong endorsement of First Steps' first six years of work in communities across South Carolina. Since inception, First Steps has helped families prepare nearly 408,350 young children for school through its community-based partnerships. ***As the state's only entity focused exclusively on increasing school readiness outcomes*** for all children, First Steps partnerships served nearly 69,300 children ages 0-5 and their families in 46 South Carolina counties during fiscal year 2006. To achieve the goals outlined in First Steps' enabling legislation, local and regional partnerships focus on five broad strategy areas:

### FAMILY STRENGTHENING

**GOAL:** First Steps works collaboratively with its agency partners, the faith community and private sector to support parents and families in their own efforts to maximize the school readiness, well-being and preparation for long-term academic success of the state's young children.

▶ **This year, First Steps served 10,135 families and 23,352 children through family strengthening strategies in 44 counties (ex: Parents as Teachers, early and family literacy programs).**

### HEALTHY START

**GOAL:** First Steps recognizes the importance of a healthy start in maximizing both school readiness and the long-term well-being of children. First Steps partners with families, the medical community and other stakeholders to leverage resources for – and increase awareness of – the healthcare, nutrition and early developmental needs of the state's young children.

▶ **This year, First Steps served 5,927 families and 2,284 children through healthy start programs in 14 counties (ex: early vision and dental screenings, referrals to medical homes, child care nutrition and Healthy Start programs, asthma programming and prevention of maltreatment and abuse).**



# TO INCREASE READINESS

## CHILD CARE QUALITY

**GOAL:** First Steps recognizes quality child care as a research-based determinant of school readiness. As such, First Steps collaborates with parents, the child care community and its agency and community partners to maximize child care quality throughout the state. Particular emphasis is placed on assisting parents in their efforts to identify settings most likely to improve developmental outcomes, and assist providers in their efforts to maximize the learning environments they provide for young children.

▶ **This year, First Steps served 710 child care facilities and 37,680 children through child care quality programs in 41 counties (ex: child care scholarships, facility quality enhancement, child care staff training and consultation).**

## EARLY EDUCATION

**GOAL:** First Steps leverages state, local and private resources to increase the quality of, and number of children participating in, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten programs in both the public and private sectors. Particular emphasis is placed on fidelity to research-based instructional models and targeting of students at risk of early school failure.

▶ **This year, First Steps served 1,658 children through early education strategies in 29 counties (ex: expanded public and private 4-year-old kindergarten).**

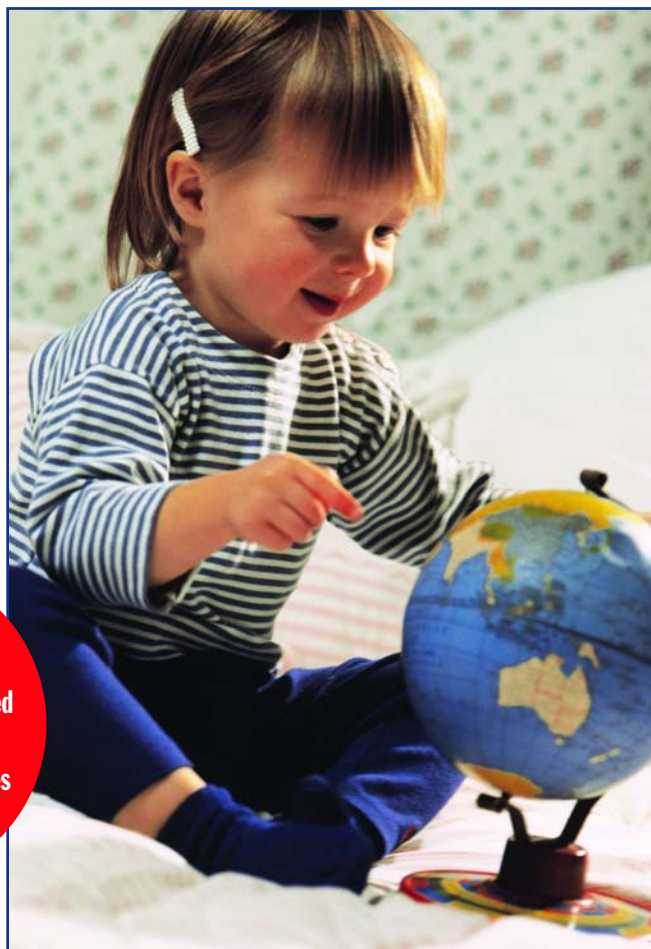
### FAST FACT:

In 2006, First Steps served nearly 69,300 children ages 0-5 and their families in 46 S.C. counties.

## SCHOOL TRANSITION

**GOAL:** First Steps recognizes school entry as a pivotal transition point in each child's educational career. In an effort to ensure strong collaborative relationships between the state's families and schools, First Steps targets children at risk of early school failure by developing strategies to maximize parents' understandings of state and local expectations and ensure a smooth school transition for each child.

▶ **This year, First Steps served 1,759 children through school transition strategies in 34 counties (ex: Countdown to Kindergarten).**





## First Steps Strengthens Families by Working to:

1. Increase family literacy and parent education levels;
2. Improve parental employability and employment;
3. Increase effectiveness of parenting related to child nurturance, learning and interaction, language, health and safety;
4. Increase successful parenting/family literacy program targeting, service integration, results documentation; and
5. Increase early parent involvement in 4-K–12 education settings.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING:

► **Parent Education** – Increase parents' ability to stimulate their child's intellectual, social and physical development with model parent programs such as Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Parent-Child Home- Program (PCH-P).

► **Early and Family Literacy** – Extend the abilities of families to read with their children through programs such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, English as a Second Language, Mother Read/Father Read or library-based programs.

The quality of family life is fundamental to the wellbeing of children. Family relationships in general and the parent-child relationship in particular have a pervasive influence on the psychological, physical, social and economic wellbeing of children. Many significant mental health, social and economic problems are linked to disturbances in family functioning and the breakdown of family relationships.

*Triple P – Positive Parenting Program*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY FAMILY  
STRENGTHENING  
PROGRAMS:

10,135



## FISCAL YEAR 2006 RESULTS

### 1. Increased parent knowledge and public awareness of the importance of early learning.

- 53,619 home visits served 10,135 families.
- 83 percent of children served through family strengthening programs were between the ages of 0–3.
- Provided practical, focused school readiness tips for parents through print media reaching over 275,000 homes statewide.

### 2. Enhanced the school readiness of children through literacy-based services and programming for families.

- 23,352 children served in First Steps-funded family literacy/learning programs.
- Family strengthening programs provided 5,386 health and developmental screenings.
- Over 5,000 children served and 11,126 books distributed through book distribution and library-based literacy programs.
- More than 100,000 books given to children, with 100 percent partnerships offering integrated programming for families whose 8,029 children receive Dolly Parton Imagination books in the home.

### 3. Conducted a client level analysis of parenting programming expenditures and results funded by both federal and state resources.

- 10,806 children and adults were served in family strengthening programs, of which nearly 66 percent were enrolled in Medicaid.
- 3,181 at-risk children in First Steps-supported Parents as Teachers (PAT) programs were linked to needed support services such as Food Stamps, WIC and housing assistance.
- 1,186 parents achieved a higher education level through First Steps-supported programs.
- Leveraged \$393,000 in new federal funds were applied to family strengthening programs for targeted groups of families.

#### FAST FACT:

40% of South Carolina's children live in single-parent families.  
(SC Kids Count, 2004)



**First Steps Partnerships Participating  
in Family Strengthening Strategies**



## First Steps Ensures Healthy Starts for Children by Working to:

1. Improve the health and development of young children so they enter school physically and mentally prepared to succeed;
2. Integrate medical provider, school readiness and early literacy services; and
3. Leverage federal resources for targeted families with young children at greatest risk for school failure, expanding medical anticipatory guidance to parents with special needs and other at-risk children.

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHY START

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR BETTER HEALTH AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN:

**Early Periodic Screenings & Confirmed Diagnosis and Treatment** – Conduct screenings at child care centers with a focus on the importance of immunization and early identification, prevention and treatment of physical problems that affect learning.

**Technical Assistance and Health Consultation for Child Care Providers** – Identify health and safety issues in child care facilities. Teach child care workers how to prevent the spread of infection and food-borne illnesses, and to spot illnesses likely to spread among children in a child care facility.

**Nutrition Education** – Provide low-income families and child care providers with on-site and home-based nutritional counseling, reducing preventable developmental delays and deficiencies related to poor nutrition.

**Pediatric and Postpartum Home Health Visits** – Assess the overall physical health of infants and their mothers, evaluate the overall safety conditions of the home; and provide information about growth and development and linking families to medical homes. These services will be offered in collaboration with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

**“As a nation, we can and must do more to ensure that every baby is born healthy and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability.”**

*Richard H. Carmona, U. S. Surgeon General*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY HEALTHY  
START PROGRAMS:

**2,284**





## FISCAL YEAR 2006 RESULTS

### 1. Collaborated with many partners and increased penetration of school readiness services to Medicaid-eligible families; referrals of uninsured and underinsured families with children 0–5 to medical homes through school readiness interventions.

- 2,211 referrals made to support services such as doctors, dentists, WIC, and BabyNet for 1,727 families.
- 999 families linked to a doctor/medical home.
- 1,262 children served through public health promotion programs.
- 521 children served through nutrition programs.

### 2. Collaborated with many partners and increased immunization rates, adequate medical care and early referral for learning disability/health issues which impact school performance among South Carolina families with children 0–5.

- 10,206 general health screenings and assessments.
- 650 dental screenings, 2,128 hearing screenings, 2,100 vision screenings.
- 164 family/home environment assessments.

### 3. Improved parent/caregiver knowledge regarding health and safety issues for young children, and potential educational success impact.

- 2,284 children served through home-based health services.
- 771 prenatal and 216 postnatal assessments/visits.

### 4. Increased medical service delivery/integration at school and child care sites where it is possible to meet parent needs and ensure health needs of young children are met.

- 40 children served through non-home-based health services.
- 42 child care facilities or early education classes received a health visit.

### 5. Increased involvement of pediatric community in family literacy/school readiness referral and guidance.

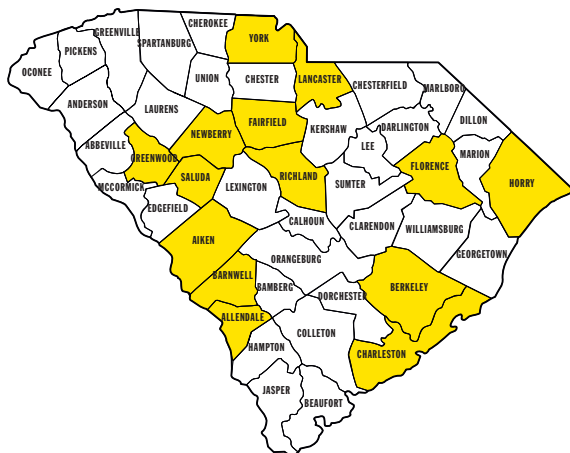
- 1,043 books provided by First Steps through medical providers.

### 6. Increased leverage of federal monies for targeted at-risk student populations.

- \$10,000 in federal funds were applied to healthy start programs through leveraging allocated state funds.

### FAST FACT:

1 in 10 of South Carolina's children are born with low birth weight. (SC Kids Count, 2004)



First Steps Partnerships Participating in Healthy Start Strategies



## First Steps Improves Child Care Quality by Working to:

1. Increase availability of quality child care choices for parents, as measured by increasing numbers of child care providers operating at higher levels of quality;
2. Increase number of child care vouchers available to SC families for quality child care;
3. Increase school readiness focus in child care settings;
4. Increase leverage of federal and private resources to serve the state's most at-risk children;
5. Increase number of child care workers achieving progress toward early education certification and continued professional development;
6. Improve quality of physical and learning environment in child care settings of all type; and
7. Expand public and private partnerships in 4-K education.

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY CHILD  
CARE PROGRAMS:

**37,680**

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE:

**Quality Enhancement** – Assist child care providers to improve program quality by funding targeted upgrades to meet DSS licensing or ABC-enhanced requirements (health and safety, educational curricula, equipment and supplies), and to further enhance learning environments for young children.

**Staff Training and Development** – Provide ongoing staff development and mentoring to assist providers in meeting DSS training requirements, increasing the knowledge of child care workers and improving the quality of programs offered in participating child care facilities.

**Child Care Vouchers** – Provide subsidies for quality child care programs to eligible families and their children and increase the number of child care slots in South Carolina.

**Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood Project** – Provide scholarships for teachers working in child care to complete college coursework in early childhood education, often enabling them to increase their compensation. T.E.A.C.H. is jointly managed by First Steps and DSS through the Center for Child Care Career Development in Greenville.



**“They didn’t want to know about sewer hookups. They assumed that would be there. They wanted to know where they were going to find quality child care.”**

*Bob Geolas, Executive Director,  
Clemson University’s International  
Center for Automotive Research (ICAR)  
on a company planning to bring 200  
new jobs to South Carolina.*

## FISCAL YEAR 2006 RESULTS

### 1. Increased availability of quality child care choices for parents, as measured by increasing numbers of child care providers operating at a higher rate of care.

- 20,231 children were served through child care quality enhancement programs.
- 324 child care providers participated in quality enhancement programs.
- 35 child care providers became licensed, 147 child care providers became ABC-enhanced and 5 child care providers became National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited.

### 2. Increased school readiness knowledge and skill of child care professionals.

- 17,722 children were in child care centers where staff training and development took place.
- 1,141 training sessions and workshops for child care workers were held by First Steps partnerships across the state.
- 1,361 hours of training in literacy techniques offered to 226 early care and education staff and parents.

### 3. Increased leverage of federal monies for targeted at-risk student populations.

- \$245,000 in federal funds were applied to child care programs through leveraging allocated state funds.

### 4. Increased access to quality child care through scholarships.

- 999 children and families in need received resources through child care scholarship initiatives.

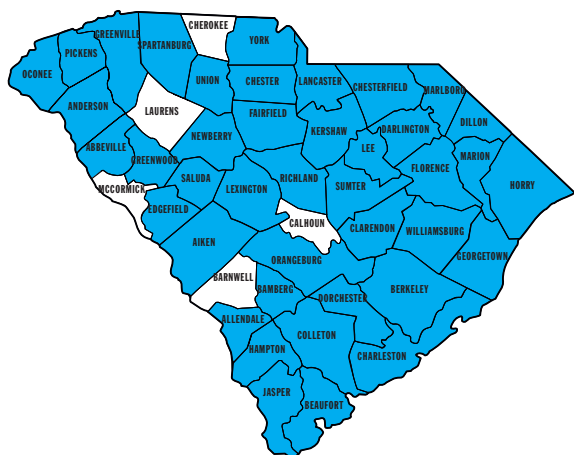
### 5. Increased number of child care providers who have completed Early Childhood Development

- (ECD) 101 and received their SC Early Childhood Credential.
- 1,630 child care providers are currently active in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program.
- 3,881 S.C. Early Childhood Credential Scholarships awarded from 2001-2006.
- 1,840 scholarships for participants pursuing Associate's Degrees awarded from 2001-2006.
- 3,062 ECD 101 credentials earned by T.E.A.C.H. recipients from 2001-2006.
- 147 Associate degrees completed by T.E.A.C.H. participants 2001-2006, an increase of 63 percent over 2005.

#### FAST FACT:

As of December 2005, South Carolina's publicly funded 4K programs were serving 17,221 children at an estimated cost of \$52.6 million.\*

\*SC Department of Education, SC First Steps, 2006



First Steps Partnerships Participating  
in Child Care Strategies





## First Steps Improves Early Education by Working to:

1. Increase first grade readiness and pre-literacy skills of children through quality early education intervention;
2. Increase ongoing 4K documentation, reporting and evaluation of results;
3. Increase the number of at-risk children served in quality 4K environments, public and private;
4. Increase the professional development and access to training for personnel teaching in public and private 4K programs;
5. Reduce the number of at-risk 4-year-old children on waiting lists for the public school Child Development program;
6. Increase the evaluation and impact analysis of federal early education spending (Head Start, Early Head Start, Even Start, Title I monies) in quality early education strategies at county levels;
7. Increase parent involvement strategies in 4K and 5K to impact involvement in K-12; and
8. Increase documentation and analysis of the state's school readiness progress.

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY  
EARLY EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS:

1,658

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR EXPANDED EARLY EDUCATION

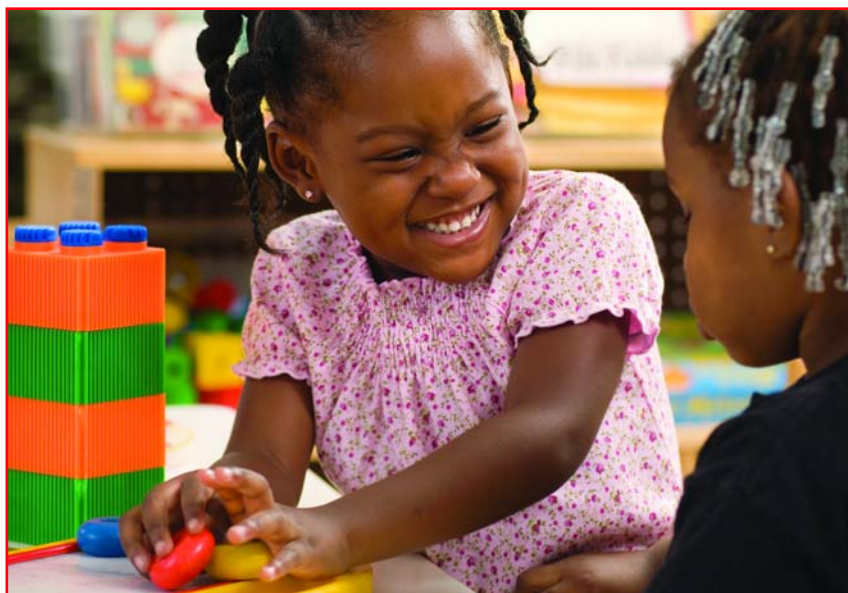
### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR EARLY EDUCATION:

**4-year-old Kindergarten (4-K)** – Add half-day and full-day public and private 4-K classes and expand existing 4-K child development half-day programs to full-day programs.

**Family Initiatives** – Create public-private partnerships or expanded 4-K choice in targeted areas; offer school readiness service integration for parents.

“High-quality early education programs can produce substantial long-term benefits for participating children, their families, and society as a whole. Several decades of rigorous research have made clear the widespread societal benefits – including reduced dependency costs, increased employment and associated tax revenue, and reduced crime – that can result from high-quality early childhood programs and that have, in some cases, far outweighed their up-front cost.”

*Rachel Christina and JoVictoria  
Nicholson-Goodman, RAND Corporation*



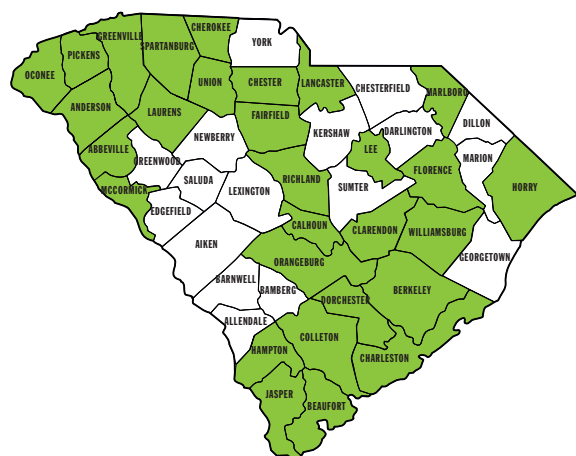
## FISCAL YEAR 2006 RESULTS

### 1. Increased the number of at-risk children being served in quality 4K classes, public and private.

- 877 additional children were served in full-day public and private 4K.
- 281 additional children were served in half-day 4K in public school.
- 148 additional children were served by having half-day 4K classes extended to full-day.
- 223 additional children were served in Head Start programs.
- 39 additional children under 4 years of age were served in early education programs.

### 2. Increased number of teachers in public and private 4K and 5K whose initial certification is Early Childhood Education.

- 1,630 child care providers are currently active in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program.
- 3,881 S.C. Early Childhood Credential Scholarships awarded from 2001-2006.
- 1,840 scholarships for participants pursuing Associate's Degrees awarded from 2001-2006.
- 3,062 ECD 101 credentials earned by T.E.A.C.H. recipients from 2001-2006.
- 147 Associate degrees completed by T.E.A.C.H. participants 2001-2006, an increase of 63 percent over 2005.



First Steps Partnerships Participating  
in Early Education Strategies.

### 3. Increased the number of parents actively participating in their child's school and education as reported by the schools at 4K and 5K (i.e., parent-teacher conferences, school governance, etc.).

- 862 children received First Steps-funded home visits in preparation for attending 5K.

### 4. Increased leverage of federal monies for at-risk student populations for early education spending.

- \$1,393,000 new federal dollars have been applied to early education programs by leveraging allocated state funds.

#### FAST FACT:

As of December 2005, South Carolina's publicly funded 4K programs were serving 17,221 children at an estimated cost of \$52.6 million. (SC Department of Education, SC First Steps, 2006)



## First Steps Ensures Successful School Transitions by Working to:

1. Maximize parents' understandings of state and local expectations and ensure a smooth school transition for each child, especially children at the greatest risk of early school failure.
2. Introduce at-risk children and families to materials and standards to be found in Kindergarten or first grade classroom.
3. Increase parent's positive relationship with the school and faculty.

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY  
SCHOOL TRANSITION  
PROGRAMS:  
**1,759**

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STUDENTS TRANSITION SUCCESSFULLY INTO SCHOOL:

**Countdown to Kindergarten** – Affect the early parent involvement of rising 5-K parents whose children are screened as at-risk for school readiness.

**Summer Readiness Initiatives** – Assist pre-5-K and pre-first grade children in making successful transitions in school; connect at-risk families to their child's school. Work to help students succeed by providing educational opportunities, encouragement and support services.

“Countdown is the gateway to a smooth transition into kindergarten. I am fortunate to have nine of my Countdown to Kindergarten students in my classroom. Countdown has allowed me to have an upper hand on my students' strengths and weaknesses. [Parents'] responses to letters and homework, as well as reading to their child, is very evident from day to day. There is a great sense of trust that I feel between me and my students' parents.”

*Excerpts from a letter on Countdown to Kindergarten by Jackie Holmes, Newberry Elementary*





## FISCAL YEAR 2006 RESULTS

### 1. Obtained greater support for the successful transition of South Carolina's most at-risk children into the K-12 school environment.

- 962 children were served through Countdown to Kindergarten. 195 children were served by a public summer or evening early education program.
- \$12,000 in federal funds have been applied to school transition programs through leveraging allocated state funds.

### 2. Achieved increased attention to the importance of parental involvement in the early grades (particularly among the hard-to-reach, at-risk communities).

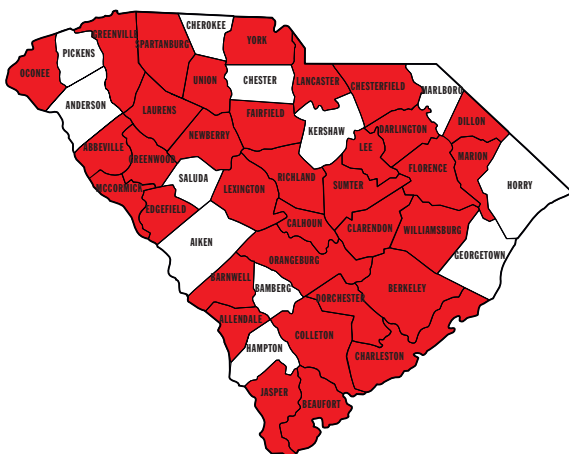
- Of Countdown participants, families were more likely to be single parent families (over 55 percent) and more than 1 of 4 parents did not graduate from high school (27 percent).

### 3. Expanded public awareness of the importance of school readiness; provided simple tools for parents, caregivers, and communities to impact children's early school success.

- 11 weekly sets of school readiness tips were released during summer 2006 as companion to the Countdown to Kindergarten program, through print and other media (90 total newspaper articles were published in daily and weekly SC newspapers, allowing the tips to be viewed an estimated 1,163,754 times).
- WLTX-TV Columbia produced/donated four 30-second public service announcements aired 260 times for a total of 130 minutes (13-county viewing audience). WLTX-TV also hosted Countdown tips and information on their Web site.

#### FAST FACT:

90.7% of this year's Countdown to Kindergarten participants qualified for free or reduced lunch.



**First Steps Partnerships Participating  
in School Transition Strategies**



**“It is research such as by James Heckman, Nobel laureate at the University of Chicago, which shows that on average, rate of return on investing in these types of intensive programs for at-risk kids is about 16 percent. Now that leaves the stock market way behind. Sixteen percent is a stunning rate of return.”**

*Chris Farrell, Marketplace Economics Correspondent*

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

First Steps brings individuals and resources together to address the most urgent readiness issues facing South Carolina's children and families. Through its 501(c)(3) status, First Steps mobilizes resources beyond state-allocated dollars, leveraging local private and public funds, federal grants, planned gifts, in-kind contributions, and volunteer time.

### LEVERAGE OF LIMITED RESOURCES

First Steps uses a combination of state funds, federal, and private funds and in-kind donations – leveraging greater resources for expanded reach to children while reducing dependence on state funds alone. First Steps partnerships at state and local levels have assisted other state entities, such as the South Carolina Department of Social Services, to achieve greater federal funds for its own child-serving programs.

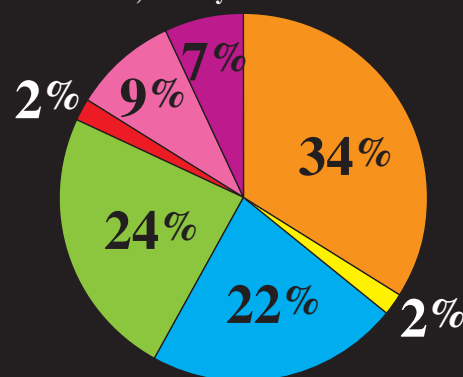
Through its volunteer partnerships, First Steps realized nearly \$475,000 in volunteer time in 2006.\*

\* [http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)



### PARTNERSHIP EXPENDITURES 2006

Including State Appropriated, In-Kind, Federal, Lottery and Private Funds.



- Parenting/Family Strengthening
- Healthy Start
- Child Care
- Early Childhood Education
- School Transition
- Program and Evaluation
- Administration

## STATEWIDE BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

**Fiscal Year 2006**  
*State Appropriated Dollars Only*

STATE - LEVEL BUDGET	Thousands
State Appropriated (Recurring Funds)	\$ 18,187
Education Improvement Appropriated (Recurring Funds)	\$ 2,000
Interest Income	\$ 281
State Appropriated Carry Forward from FY 2005	\$ 2,826
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 23,294</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION OF BUDGET</b>	
County Partnerships	\$ 21,031
Administration	\$ 1,626
State Program and Evaluation	\$ 637
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 23,294</b>
<b>ACTUAL EXPENDITURES</b>	
County Partnerships	\$ 20,539
Administration	\$ 1,665
State Program and Evaluation	\$ 540
Total Expenditures	\$ 22,744
NET (Carry Forward to Fiscal Year 2007)	\$ 550
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2006</b>	<b>TOTAL \$ 23,294</b>

### Notes:

1. FY 2005 carry forward attributed to unexpended lottery-funded projects designated to provide direct educational services to at-risk children (most lottery-funded projects did not expend funds until FY 2006).
2. Annual budgets are approved for each county partnership by the state board.
3. All goods and/or services procured by counties at or above \$10,000 are bid competitively. Local boards manage results through contracts and collaboration agreements, specifying deliverables to families and children.
4. Financial audits are conducted annually on each county partnership and all fiscal agents by an independent auditing firm.





# FIRST STEPS FUNDING FORMULA

Section 59-152-90 (E) of the enabling legislation mandates that the SC First Steps State Board of Trustees allocate funds by demographic formula to county partnerships. The formula is based on per capita income and population distribution variables. Risk variables are weighted as follows:

## FIRST STEPS FUNDING MODEL

Population of young children .....	30%
Children eligible for free/reduced lunch .....	25%
Average per capita income .....	20%
SC Kids Count Factors: * .....	25%
Children who are over age in third grade .....	5%
Children in third grade performing below basic on PACT reading ..	5%
Children in third grade performing below basic on PACT math ..	5%
Low birth weight infants .....	5%
Birth to mothers with less than high school education .....	5%
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>100%</b>

\* <http://www.sckidscount.org>

### FAST FACT:

27 percent of children in South Carolina live in poverty.  
(SC Kids Count, 2005)



**30%**

Population  
of young  
children

**25%**

Children  
eligible for  
free/reduced  
lunch

**20%**

Average  
per capita  
income

**25%**

South Carolina  
Kids Count  
Factors

“Early childhood education programs like First Steps that focus on reaching those who are at the highest academic risk are critical in South Carolina. First Steps has been making a significant, positive impact on young children and their families. At Wachovia, we take our role in the community seriously and this grant demonstrates our continued efforts to support education in this state.”

*Kendall Alley, Wachovia's regional president for South Carolina, on Wachovia's \$500,000 pledge to SC First Steps.*

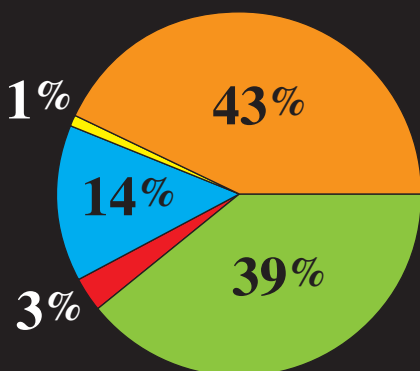
# WORKING TOGETHER TO LEVERAGE INVESTMENTS FOR CHILDREN

Through collaboration and accountability at the state and local levels, First Steps assists the state in leveraging resources for our youngest learners. First Steps' five "lines of work" are broken out by investment below, as is the non-state investment "portfolio." In addition, some First Steps public expenditures can count as match, allowing other child-serving agencies to draw down federal dollars annually to serve children and families.

## FAST FACT:

South Carolina's child care industry has an estimated \$782.2 million impact on the state's economy. (The Economic Impacts of the Child Care Industry in South Carolina, 2006)

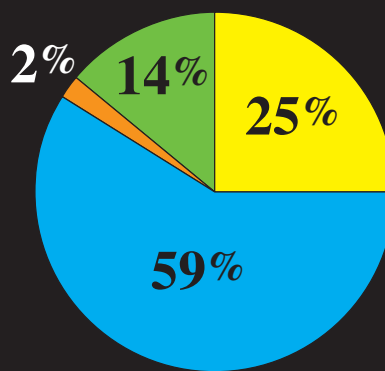
TOTAL NON-STATE  
DOLLARS BY STRATEGY



STRATEGY	THOUSANDS
Parenting/Family Strengthening	\$ 3,357
Early Education	\$ 3,123
Child Care	\$ 1,131
School Transition	\$ 208
Healthy Start	\$ 99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 7,918</b>

NOTE: The above amounts do not include SC State appropriated revenue (state, lottery or EIA), nor revenue generated by county partnerships for administration.

TOTAL NON-STATE  
DOLLARS BY SOURCE



SOURCE	THOUSANDS
In-Kind Donations	\$ 5,343
Federal Grants	\$ 2,255
Local-Level Private	\$ 1,220
State-Level Private	\$ 204
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 9,022</b>

NOTE: The above amounts do not include any state appropriated dollars granted to county partnerships.

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARTNERS: PUBLIC & PRIVATE INVESTMENT THAT MATTERS

From parents to politicians, school boards to corporate boardrooms, and charity groups to churches, collaboration with public and private organizations at the state and local level is vital to the First Steps mission. By working together, critically needed services are delivered more effectively, eliminating unproductive duplication of efforts. Many partners and organizations have supported First Steps' efforts with generous donations of funds and volunteer time that allow us collectively to build on our ability to improve school readiness for young children.

First Steps legislation requires each county partnership board to be made up of at least 32 local individuals from the following categories. In addition, each legislative delegation may appoint up to four additional representatives.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre-kindergarten through primary educator,</li> <li>2. Family education, training, and support provider,</li> <li>3. Child care and early childhood development/education provider,</li> <li>4. Healthcare provider,</li> <li>5. Transportation provider,</li> <li>6. Nonprofit organization that provides services to families and children,</li> <li>7. Faith community,</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Business community,</li> <li>9. Parents of pre-school children,</li> <li>10. Early Childhood Education Representatives,</li> <li>11. County Department of Social Services,</li> <li>12. County Department of Health and Environmental Control,</li> <li>13. Head Start,</li> <li>14. County Library, and</li> <li>15. Each of the school districts in the county.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|



### FAST FACT:

South Carolina First Steps has received \$8,392,741 in private pledges and donations since 1999.

*Kendall Alley (left), Wachovia's Regional Vice President for South Carolina, with Susan DeVenny, Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps, and Governor Mark Sanford recognize Wachovia's \$500,000 pledge to South Carolina First Steps in March 2006.*

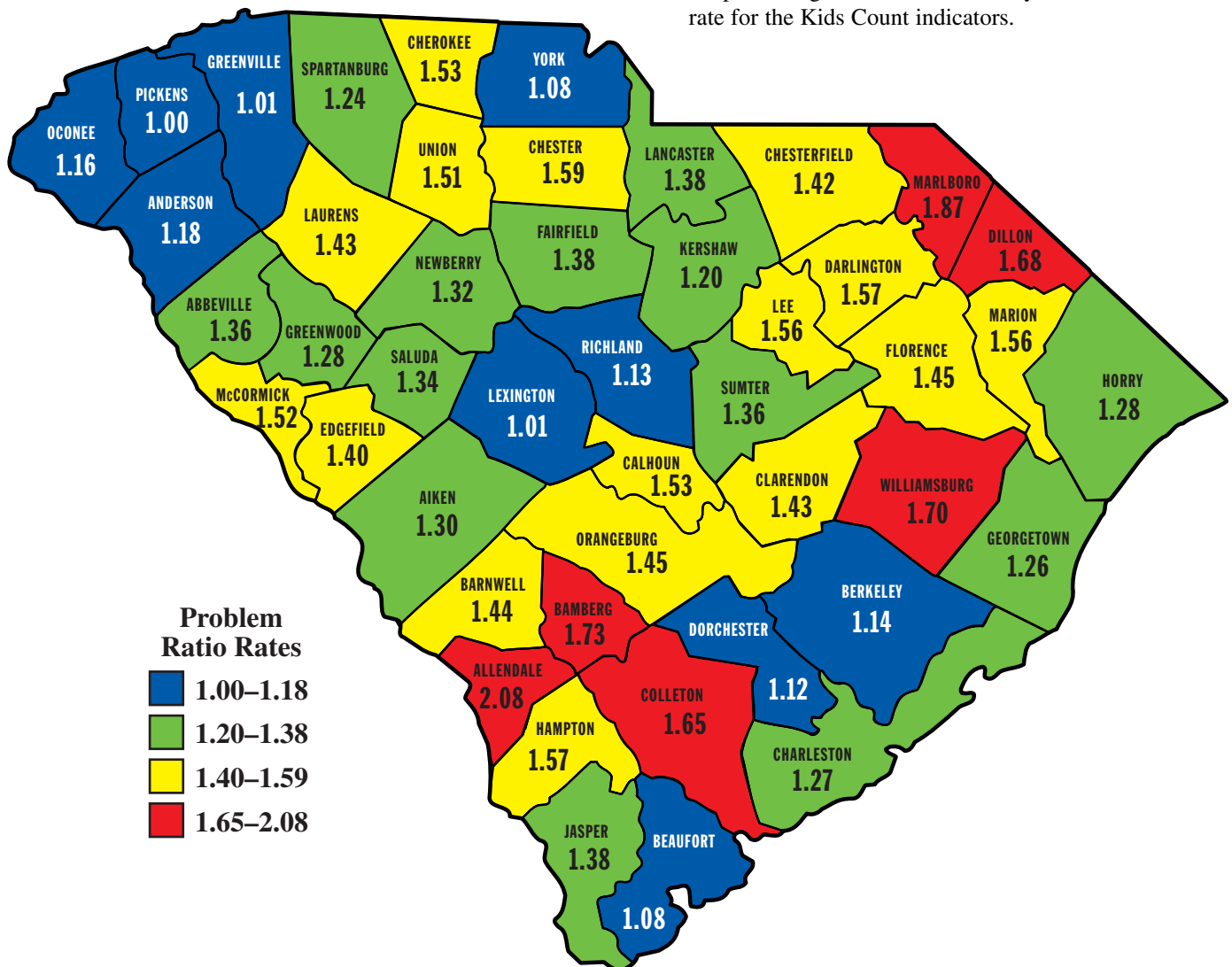


# SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES BY OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING

**Overall Child Well-being** – Rank is determined by U.S. Problem Ratios. Those ratios include low birth weight babies, infant mortality rate, child death rate, violent teen deaths (15–19), teen birth rate, idle teens (16–19), kids in poverty, and single-parent families with children.\*

\* <http://www.sckidscount.org/report05/overall.html>

**Note:** The problem rate for each county is the simple average of its rate divided by the U.S. rate for the Kids Count indicators.



#	County	Ratio	#	County	Ratio	#	County	Ratio	#	County	Ratio	#	County	Ratio
01	Pickens	1.00	11	Kershaw	1.20	21	Sumter	1.36	31	Orangeburg	1.45	41	Colleton	1.65
02	Lexington	1.01	12	Spartanburg	1.24	22	Fairfield	1.38	32	Union	1.51	42	Dillon	1.68
03	Greenville	1.01	13	Georgetown	1.26	23	Lancaster	1.38	33	McCormick	1.52	43	Williamsburg	1.70
04	York	1.08	14	Charleston	1.27	24	Jasper	1.38	34	Cherokee	1.53	44	Bamberg	1.73
05	Beaufort	1.08	15	Horry	1.28	25	Edgefield	1.40	35	Calhoun	1.53	45	Marlboro	1.87
06	Dorchester	1.12	16	Greenwood	1.28	26	Chesterfield	1.42	36	Lee	1.56	46	Allendale	2.08
07	Richland	1.13	17	Aiken	1.30	27	Clarendon	1.43	37	Marion	1.56			
08	Berkeley	1.14	18	Newberry	1.32	28	Laurens	1.43	38	Hampton	1.57			
09	Oconee	1.16	19	Saluda	1.34	29	Barnwell	1.44	39	Darlington	1.57			
10	Anderson	1.18	20	Abbeville	1.36	30	Florence	1.45	40	Chester	1.59			

# SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS ANNUAL REPORT 2006



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